

## **Cultural Groups Itinerary 8 Days/7 Nights 2023/2024/2025**

### **1st DAY: ► Distances**

Meeting at the airport and transfer to our hotel in Limassol.

### **DAY 2: PAPHOS - ► Distances**

City included in the official list of UNESCO cultural and natural treasures. Proceeding towards Paphos we stop at Petra tou Romiou where, according to Greek mythology, Aphrodite emerged from the foam of the waters. We will begin our day by visiting the monastery of Ayios Neofytos founded at the end of the 12th century by the Cypriot writer and hermit Neofytos. The Engleistra contains some of the most beautiful Byzantine frescoes (12th and 15th centuries). We will continue to visit the Tombs of the Kings which date back to the 4th century BC, carved into the rock and decorated with Doric columns.

Then we will be able to admire the famous mosaics of the house of Dionysus. The floors of these patrician villas date back to a period between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD and are considered among the most beautiful mosaics in the eastern Mediterranean. We will visit later. The last stop will be at the church of Panagia Chrysopolitissa, built in the 13th century, within whose complex you can see the column of St. Paul, where according to tradition the saint was flagellated..

### **3rd DAY: CHIROKITIA - NORTH AND SOUTH NICOSIA ► Distances**

Breakfast at the hotel. Meeting with the guide and departure for Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus outlined by the ancient Venetian walls, known thanks to the wealth of archaeological and artistic finds contained in its museums and above all for being the last city in the world divided by a wall.

Along the way, a stop at the archaeological site of Chirokitia, an ancient Neolithic settlement; the excavations carried out have brought to light evidence of one of the most important Neolithic cultures in the world. Visit to the Cathedral of San Giovanni in the archbishop's palace which houses a cycle of frescoes from 1731. Passing through the Venetian walls and the Famagusta gate we will arrive at the National Museum where you can admire the fascinating collection of Cypriot finds and treasures of inestimable value . We continue to the historic center of Nicosia (Laiki Yitonia). Free time and crossing the checkpoint, visit the caravansary, Buyuk Han, one of the most famous architectural works of the Ottoman period. The Buyuk Han is located in the center of the traditional market inside the walls. We continue to the Saint Sophia Cathedral transformed into a Mosque \* (visit from outside until the works are finished). Return to the hotel in the afternoon.

### **4th DAY: FAMAGUSTA - SALAMINA. ► Distances**

Departure for Famagusta: upon arrival visit the medieval city enclosed in mighty defensive walls. First visit to Salamis, the city where Saint Barnabas was born and killed. Visit the theatre, amphitheatre, spa and gym. We continue to visit the mausoleum convent of Saint Barnaba,

founded in the 5th century. Continue to the castle of Othello, Venetian governor of Cyprus. Last stop at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas, later transformed into a mosque, where many sovereigns were crowned kings of Cyprus and Jerusalem, and a walk through the picturesque streets of the center of Famagusta...

#### **5th DAY: ST ILARION CASTLE – BELLAPAIS – KERYNIA - ►**

##### **Distances**

The Byzantines and the Crusaders built three fortresses in northern Cyprus, among these that of Saint Hilarion was to control the western part. The castle, one of the best preserved on the island, took its name from the hermit Saint Hilarion who came here from Palestine in the 7th century to purify the mountain from pagan demons. A monastery and later a fortress arose around the saint's tomb. Over the centuries this was a stronghold of the Crusaders, the Genoese and the Venetians. It was also used as a royal palace and refuge from the plague. Even today they can admire different parts of the original structure, including the Byzantine chapel (the oldest part of the castle), numerous rooms at various levels including the monastic refectory, the royal apartments and the belvedere with the vaulted roof. From the upper wall you can climb the two towers to a height of 732 m above the sea. We continue to Bellapais where we visit the convent founded at the end of the 12th century. By Amaury de Lusignan. Departure for Kerynia, an enchanting port town, where we visit the 11th century castle. with the museum which preserves the wreck of a ship wrecked around 300 BC.

#### **6th DAY: BYZANTINE CHURCHES ( SAN NICOLAOS – PODITHOU – ASINOU ) ► Distances**

Departure for the Troodos mountain and visit the church of St. Nicholas, one of the best frescoed churches in Cyprus. Continue to the church of Panagia di Pothithou in Galata. Last visit to the 12th century Asinou church. whose frescoes are among the best Byzantine examples.

#### **7th DAY: CURIUM – KOLOSSI – APOLLO YLATIS – OMODOS**

##### **► Distances**

Departure after breakfast for the Greek-Roman amphitheater of Curium, an important city-state, today it is one of the most spectacular archaeological sites on the island. The house of Eustolios, originally a private Roman villa, became during the first period christiano, a public center for activities recreational. We continue to the Sanctuary of Apollo Ylatis, god of woods and then to the castle of Kolossi, an original example of military architecture which was used in 1291 as the grand command of the knights of the order of St. John of Jerusalem. At the end, continue to Omodos and visit this important wine center and the famous monastery of Stravos (Holy Cross), located in the center of the square of the same name.

#### **DAY 8: LARNACA - ITALY. ► Distances**

Breakfast. Transfer to the airport for return.